



Europe and Japan in Ruins

MAIN IDEA

ECONOMICS World War II cost millions of human lives and billions of dollars in damages. It left Europe and Japan in ruins.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The United States survived World War II undamaged, allowing it to become a world leader.

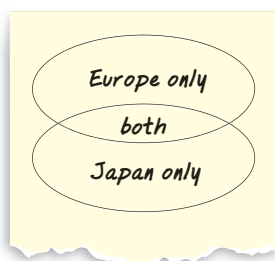
TERMS & NAMES

- Nuremberg Trials
- demilitarization
- democratization

SETTING THE STAGE After six long years of war, the Allies finally were victorious. However, their victory had been achieved at a very high price. World War II had caused more death and destruction than any other conflict in history. It left 60 million dead. About one-third of these deaths occurred in one country, the Soviet Union. Another 50 million people had been uprooted from their homes and wandered the countryside in search of somewhere to live. Property damage ran into billions of U.S. dollars.

TAKING NOTES

Comparing and Contrasting Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the aftermath of World War II in Europe and Japan.



Devastation in Europe

By the end of World War II, Europe lay in ruins. Close to 40 million Europeans had died, two-thirds of them civilians. Constant bombing and shelling had reduced hundreds of cities to rubble. The ground war had destroyed much of the countryside. Displaced persons from many nations were left homeless.

A Harvest of Destruction A few of the great cities of Europe—Paris, Rome, and Brussels—remained largely undamaged by war. Many, however, had suffered terrible destruction. The Battle of Britain left huge areas of London little more than blackened ruins. Warsaw, the capital of Poland, was almost completely destroyed. In 1939, Warsaw had a population of nearly 1.3 million. When Soviet soldiers entered the city in January 1945, only 153,000 people remained. Thousands of tons of Allied bombs had demolished 95 percent of the central area of Berlin. One U.S. officer stationed in the German capital reported, “Wherever we looked we saw desolation. It was like a city of the dead.”

After the bombings, many civilians stayed where they were and tried to get on with their lives. Some lived in partially destroyed homes or apartments. Others huddled in cellars or caves made from rubble. They had no water, no electricity, and very little food.

A large number of people did not stay where they were. Rather, they took to the roads. These displaced persons included the survivors of concentration camps, prisoners of war, and refugees who found themselves in the wrong country when postwar treaties changed national borders. They wandered across Europe, hoping to find their families or to find a safe place to live.

Simon Weisenthal, a prisoner at Auschwitz, described the search made by Holocaust survivors:

Costs of World War II: Allies and Axis			
	Direct War Costs	Military Killed/Missing	Civilians Killed
United States	\$288.0 billion*	292,131**	—
Great Britain	\$117.0 billion	272,311	60,595
France	\$111.3 billion	205,707***	173,260†
USSR	\$93.0 billion	13,600,000	7,720,000
Germany	\$212.3 billion	3,300,000	2,893,000††
Japan	\$41.3 billion	1,140,429	953,000
* In 1994 dollars. ** An additional 115,187 servicemen died from non-battle causes. *** Before surrender to Nazis. † Includes 65,000 murdered Jews. †† Includes about 170,000 murdered Jews and 56,000 foreign civilians in Germany.		SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts 1. Drawing Conclusions Which of the nations listed in the chart suffered the greatest human costs? 2. Comparing How does U.S. spending on the war compare with the spending of Germany and Japan?	

PRIMARY SOURCE

Across Europe a wild tide of frantic survivors was flowing. . . . Many of them didn't really know where to go. . . . And yet the survivors continued their pilgrimage of despair. . . . "Perhaps someone is still alive. . . ." Someone might tell where to find a wife, a mother, children, a brother—or whether they were dead. . . . The desire to find one's people was stronger than hunger, thirst, fatigue.

SIMON WEISENTHAL, quoted in *Never to Forget: The Jews of the Holocaust*

Misery Continues After the War The misery in Europe continued for years after the war. The fighting had ravaged Europe's countryside, and agriculture had been completely disrupted. Most able-bodied men had served in the military, and the women had worked in war production. Few remained to plant the fields. With the transportation system destroyed, the meager harvests often did not reach the cities. Thousands died as famine and disease spread through the bombed-out cities. The first postwar winter brought more suffering as people went without shoes and coats.

Postwar Governments and Politics

Despairing Europeans often blamed their leaders for the war and its aftermath. Once the Germans had lost, some prewar governments—like those in Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Norway—returned quickly. In countries like Germany, Italy, and France, however, a return to the old leadership was not desirable. Hitler's Nazi government had brought Germany to ruins. Mussolini had led Italy to defeat. The Vichy government had collaborated with the Nazis. Much of the old leadership was in disgrace. Also, in Italy and France, many resistance fighters were communists. **A**

After the war, the Communist Party promised change, and millions were ready to listen. In both France and Italy, Communist Party membership skyrocketed. The communists made huge gains in the first postwar elections. Anxious to speed up a political takeover, the communists staged a series of violent strikes. Alarmed French and Italians reacted by voting for anticommunist parties. Communist Party membership and influence began to decline. And they declined even more as the economies of France and Italy began to recover.

MAIN IDEA

Identifying Problems

A Why might it have been difficult to find democratic government leaders in post-Nazi Germany?

Connect to Today



A New War Crimes Tribunal

In 1993, the UN established the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to prosecute war crimes committed in the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s. (See Chapter 35.) This was the first international war crimes court since those held in Nuremberg and Tokyo after World War II.

The ICTY issued its first indictment in 1994 and began trial proceedings in 1996. By mid-2003, more than 30 defendants had been tried and found guilty. They received sentences of 5 to 48 years in jail. Another 25 were on trial or awaiting trial. The most prominent of these defendants was Slobadan Milosevic, the former president of Yugoslavia. He was charged with 66 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity, and other war crimes.

The Nuremberg Trials While nations were struggling to recover politically and economically, they also tried to deal with the issue of war crimes. During 1945 and 1946, an International Military Tribunal representing 23 nations put Nazi war criminals on trial in Nuremberg, Germany. In the first of these [Nuremberg Trials](#), 22 Nazi leaders were charged with waging a war of aggression. They were also accused of committing “crimes against humanity”—the murder of 11 million people.

Adolf Hitler, SS chief Heinrich Himmler, and Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels had committed suicide long before the trials began. However, Hermann Göring, the commander of the Luftwaffe; Rudolf Hess, Hitler’s former deputy; and other high-ranking Nazi leaders remained to face the charges.

Hess was found guilty and was sentenced to life in prison. Göring received a death sentence, but cheated the executioner by committing suicide. Ten other Nazi leaders were hanged on October 16, 1946. Hans Frank, the “Slayer of Poles,” was the only convicted Nazi to express remorse: “A thousand years will pass,” he said, “and still this guilt of Germany will not have been erased.” The bodies of those executed were burned at the concentration camp of Dachau (DAHK•ow). They were cremated in the same ovens that had burned so many of their victims.

Postwar Japan

The defeat suffered by Japan in World War II left the country in ruins. Two million lives had been lost. The country’s major cities, including the capital, Tokyo, had been largely destroyed by bombing raids. The atomic bomb had turned Hiroshima and Nagasaki into blackened wastelands. The Allies had stripped Japan of its colonial empire.

Occupied Japan General Douglas MacArthur, who had accepted the Japanese surrender, took charge of the U.S. occupation of Japan. MacArthur was determined to be fair and not to plant the seeds of a future war. Nevertheless, to ensure that peace would prevail, he began a process of [demilitarization](#), or disbanding the Japanese armed forces. He achieved this quickly, leaving the Japanese with only a small police force. MacArthur also began bringing war criminals to trial. Out of 25 surviving defendants, former Premier Hideki Tojo and six others were condemned to hang.

MacArthur then turned his attention to [democratization](#), the process of creating a government elected by the people. In February 1946, he and his American political advisers drew up a new constitution. It changed the empire into a constitutional monarchy like that of Great Britain. The Japanese accepted the constitution. It went into effect on May 3, 1947.


MacArthur was not told to revive the Japanese economy. However, he was instructed to broaden land ownership and increase the participation of workers and farmers in the new democracy. To this end, MacArthur put forward a plan that required absentee landlords with huge estates to sell land to the government. The government then sold the land to tenant farmers at reasonable prices. Other reforms pushed by MacArthur gave workers the right to create independent labor unions. **B**

MAIN IDEA

Making Inferences

B How would demilitarization and a revived economy help Japan achieve democracy?

Occupation Brings Deep Changes

The new constitution was the most important achievement of the occupation. It brought deep changes to Japanese society. A long Japanese tradition had viewed the emperor as divine. He was also an absolute ruler whose will was law. The emperor now had to declare that he was not divine. That admission was as shocking to the Japanese as defeat. His power was also dramatically reduced. Like the ruler of Great Britain, the emperor became largely a figurehead—a symbol of Japan. 

The new constitution guaranteed that real political power in Japan rested with the people. The people elected a two-house parliament, called the Diet. All citizens over the age of 20, including women, had the right to vote. The government was led by a prime minister chosen by a majority of the Diet. A constitutional bill of rights protected basic freedoms. One more key provision of the constitution—Article 9—stated that the Japanese could no longer make war. They could fight only if attacked.

In September 1951, the United States and 47 other nations signed a formal peace treaty with Japan. The treaty officially ended the war. Some six months later, the U.S. occupation of Japan was over. However, with no armed forces, the Japanese agreed to a continuing U.S. military presence to protect their country. The United States and Japan, once bitter enemies, were now allies.


In the postwar world, enemies not only became allies. Sometimes, allies became enemies. World War II had changed the political landscape of Europe. The Soviet Union and the United States emerged from the war as the world's two major powers. They also ended the war as allies. However, it soon became clear that their postwar goals were very different. This difference stirred up conflicts that would shape the modern world for decades.



▲ Emperor Hirohito and U.S. General Douglas MacArthur look distant and uncomfortable as they pose here.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Causes

 Why did the Americans choose the British system of government for the Japanese, instead of the American system?

SECTION

5

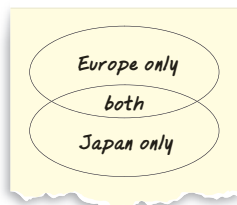
ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Nuremberg Trials
- demilitarization
- democratization

USING YOUR NOTES

2. How did the aftermath of the war in Europe differ from the aftermath of the war in Japan?



MAIN IDEAS

3. Why did so many Europeans take to the roads and wander the countryside after the war?
4. How did the Allies deal with the issue of war crimes in Europe?
5. What three programs did General Douglas MacArthur introduce during the U.S. occupation of Japan?

CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **ANALYZING CAUSES** Why do you think that many Europeans favored communism after World War II?
7. **FORMING AND SUPPORTING OPINIONS** Do you think it was right for the Allies to try only Nazi and Japanese leaders for war crimes? Why or why not?
8. **MAKING INFERENCES** Why was demilitarization such an important part of the postwar program for Japan?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** ECONOMICS In the role of an observer for the United States government, write a **report** on the economic situation in Europe after World War II. Illustrate your report with appropriate charts and graphs.

CONNECT TO TODAY CREATING A RADIO NEWS REPORT

Conduct research on a recent trial at the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Use your findings to create a two-minute radio **news report** on the trial.